

Don't Be Greedy: Buddy Passes are Not a Side Hustle



As airline employees, one of the best perks of our jobs is the ability to fly everywhere for free or cheap. If we mention the type of work we do in a casual conversation, it will surely prompt an enthusiastic response, even from complete strangers. A popular t-shirt for sale online proclaims: “Marry me and fly free.”

There’s no doubt that for most airline employees, the freedom and flexibility that our travel benefits provide is a key reason why we chose this line of work. In recent years, as airlines enjoy record load factors (and profits), traveling space-available has become more of a challenge, but with a little bit of planning and luck, it is something we all enjoy. We appreciate the freedom and flexibility to stay in touch with family and friends while we explore the world. Pass travel is priceless and priceless it should stay.

Pass travel programs allow employees to enjoy the products that we create, but they are still the company’s property. When an employee brokers the passes or treats them

as personal assets, those actions can get them fired, or even arrested. IAM Committees are very good at preventing unjust terminations, and hundreds of members have been successfully defended against being unfairly fired. These good outcomes, however, do not come to members involved in theft or fraud.

Repeated violations of pass travel programs by employees can prompt the airline to restrict or limit them for everyone.

In summary, messing with your pass privileges is a bad move, so don't be greedy. As tempting as it may seem to try to monetize this perk, don't do it. The enhanced travel privileges we enjoy that allow us to choose our traveling companions can be changed at the airlines' discretion, with notification to the union being the only requirement. You do not have to marry your traveling companion anymore, like the t-shirt says, but be cautious. And know who your buddies are.

Contact an EAP Representative if you have problems handling finances or family life. IAM District 141 EAP Staff and Volunteer EAP Coordinators can help you with resources in the community to address your situation and develop a plan of action to meet your needs. Find more information at <https://iam141.org/eap/>